

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Tuesday, April 6, 2010

To: Congressional Health Staff

From: Amy Hall
Director, Office of Legislation
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Subject: CMS Awards Initial 2010 Grant Funding to State Health Insurance Assistance Programs

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), yesterday, announced the first installment of funding – nearly \$41.6 million – to State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) to help Medicare beneficiaries get more information about their health care choices. These 2010 grants are available to 54 existing SHIP organizations in the United States and its territories.

Yesterday's award announcement of \$41.6 million will be available to SHIPs for the grant year starting April 1, 2010 and ending March 31, 2011 for direct grants and support contracts. For 2010, CMS has implemented new performance measures and benchmarking methods to help evaluate SHIPs' services. In September, approximately \$1.5 million in performance grants will be distributed to SHIPs for meeting these measures and benchmarks.

CMS expects the SHIPs to use the FY 2010 funding to provide: one-on-one counseling, and to conduct targeted community-based outreach to all beneficiaries. CMS will continue to support the SHIPs with training and technical assistance, helping to ensure that the community networks remain fully capable of accessing and using CMS' 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), regional office resources, as well as the online tools at www.medicare.gov and www.SHIPtalk.org to provide assistance to Medicare beneficiaries.

The press release and corresponding state specific awards may be viewed at:
http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/media/press_releases.asp.

If you have any questions about this announcement, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation. Thank you.